# Claims

1. Process for automatically monitoring the hardware resources of a computer (1), comprising the steps of:

- initiating a monitoring agent (11) for analysing (21) the software packages installed into said computer and for elaborating a direct representation of said analysis;
- initiating a connection to a conformity server (3) connected to an Internet or Intranet network for transmitting said direct representation of the software package, together with data representative of the actual hardware configuration of said computer;
- elaborating in said conformity server an ideal hardware configuration and comparing said ideal configuration to said actual configuration;
- in response to said comparison, transmitting information to said monitoring agent (11) so that the latter can initiate a business transaction with an external server.

2. Process executed in a computer for automatically monitoring the hardware resources existing in said computer (1), comprising the steps of:

- initiating an monitoring agent (11) for the purpose of analysing the software package which are installed into said computer and for elaborating a direct representation of said analysis ;
- initiating a connection to a conformity server (3) connected to an Internet or Intranet network for the purpose of receiving data representative of typical hardware configurations and for deriving an ideal hardware configuration;
- initiating a determination of the actual hardware resources for the purpose of a comparison to said ideal hardware configuration;
- informing when necessary the user of the lack of hardware resources reported by said determination step.

3. Process according to claim 1 or 2 wherein said monitoring agent connects to an accessory server (4) and transmits a request containing information representative

of the actual and ideal hardware resources to an external accessory server for the purpose of preparing and completing a transaction.

4. Process according to claim 3 wherein the information received from the conformity server is formatted in the XML Extended Markup Language which is associated to Document Type Definition (DTD) file

5. Process according to claim 4 characterised in that the operating system is a Windows type operating system and that the analysis of the software packages configuration is based on an analysis of the registry.

6. Process according to claim 5 characterised in that the analysis of the software packages configuration is based upon the systematic research of the file types which are loaded onto the hard disk drive.

7. Process according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that said request transmitted to said conformity server (3) conforms to the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and contains a query string containing information representative of the type or model of the computer.

8. Process according to claim 3 characterised in that said request transmitted to said accessory server (4) conforms to the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP), and contains a query string containing information extracted from a local profile and representative of the actual hardware resources.

9. Process according to claim 8 wherein said local profile contains profile data that are representative of platform configuration, and are extracted from information available at the Basic Input Output System (BIOS) level.

10. Process according to claim 8 wherein said profile data are collected by means of interrogation of standardised systems management interfaces present in the client computer .

11. Process according to claim 8 wherein said profile parameters are collected by means of an interrogation via the Distributed Management Interface (DMI) or Window Management Interface (WMI).

12. Process according to claim 8 wherein said monitoring agent (11) receives the response from said accessory server (4) under the form of a Hypertext Markup Language (HTML) page, and pushes it to a web browser for allowing the completion of the transaction between the user and the server.

13. Process according to claim 3 characterised in that the conformity server posts a list of accessory servers to which the request transmitted by said agent can be mapped thereby permitting modification of the offers that can be made to the user.

14. Process according to claim 1 or 2 characterised in that said monitoring agent is downloaded from said conformity server (3) .

15. Process according to claim 3 wherein said conformity server (3) and said accessories servers are grouped in order to form an unique server to which said monitoring agent can post request.

16. A transaction aid for assisting a transaction between an user and at least one remote server (3, 4), the or each said remote server being prepared to process at least one predetermined command, said transaction aid comprising program code elements for carrying a method as claimed in any preceding claim.

17. A transaction aid as claimed in claim 16 in the form of a personal computer, the program code elements being implemented as a local agent for execution on the computer.

18. A transaction aid as claimed in claim 16 wherein the local agent is preloaded and arranged to execute when the computer is booted.

19. A transaction aid computer program product having program code elements for carrying out a method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 14.

20. A computer program product as claimed in claim 19 in the form of an agent.

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